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ABSTRACT

The past decade has found administrators, faculty, staff and students at institutions of higher education involved in the task of trying to improve the process by which students are prepared. These efforts at many institutions have been based on the determination of the general learner outcomes that are viewed as critical to the success of all students and the relationship of these outcomes to the mission of the institution. This article presents a six-step model, using Key Quality Indicators as the basis for curriculum improvement, that has been used as a means of achieving a high level of quality in instructional programs. The six steps are: Steps 1 and 2--The identification and validation of key quality indicators; Step 3--Developing an assessment plan for tracking performance; Step 4--Establish a base line and monitor trends for each key quality indicator; Step 5--Benchmark your processes against similar functions in other institutions; Step 6--Establish 'stretch' goals. Proper implementation and continuous evaluation of the model should result in the development and maintenance of quality instructional programs. (Figures illustrate the six steps. Contains 16 references.) (ND)

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ED 399 230

"OUTCOMES BASED EDUCATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION:
A RECREATION AND LEISURE APPLICATION"

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ABSTRACT

The past decade has found administrators, faculty, staff and students at institutions of higher education involved in the task of trying to improve the process by which students are prepared. These efforts at many institutions have been based on the determination of the general learner outcome that they believe are critical to the success of all their students and the relationship of these outcomes to the mission of the institution. This article presents a six step model that has been used as a means of achieving a high level of quality in instructional programs.

OUTCOME BASED EDUCATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION:

A RECREATION AND LEISURE APPLICATION

The past decade has found administrators, faculty, staff and students at institutions of higher education involved in the task of trying to improve the process by which students are prepared. One of the primary reasons that institutions of higher education have begun to take a hard look at the student preparation process is that they are feeling pressure from external and internal forces to produce graduates who are capable of competing in a rapidly changing world. In other words to produce graduates who are both competent and experienced.

External pressure is being felt from corporate America, government and society. Some segments of corporate America have become so frustrated with higher educations lack of response to their needs that they have established their own employee education programs. Government has expressed its' frustration with higher education through its' refusal to increase funding, by making funding dependent upon student performance on norm referenced tests, through downsizing of institutions, and by the total elimination of degree programs, departments and colleges.

Society has expressed its' frustration with public education including higher education by voicing its' lack of confidence in the system. This lack of confidence is evidenced by voter refusal to increase funding for public education. Further evidence of this frustration may be seen in the increasing demand for public disclosure of student performance on regionally and nationally norm referenced tests and the mandate to return to a focus on teaching by tenure track faculty.

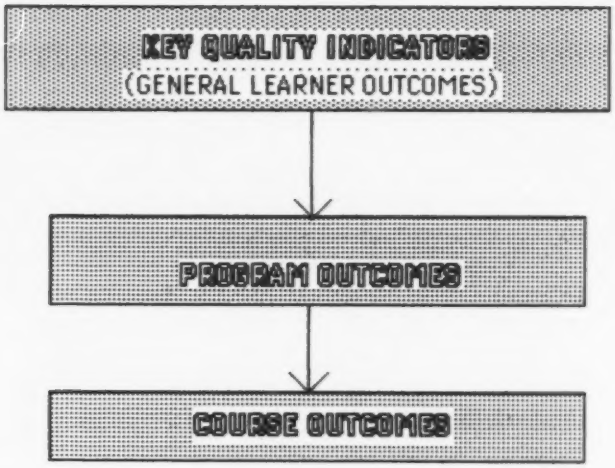
Higher education is experiencing internal pressure to improve the educational experience from students, administration and faculty. Students want to know that the subject matter they are learning has relevance and how it is going to help prepare them to compete in today's job market. Students, administrators and even parents want proof from faculty that job opportunities in the

students area of study are available, and that graduates of the institution are gaining employment in their specific area of study. Administrators in higher education are exerting pressure on the academic disciplines to measure the effectiveness of their curriculum in preparing students to compete in a rapidly changing society. As funding for higher education becomes tighter, faculty are placing pressure on their colleagues in other disciplines to continuously show the relevance of their academic discipline to the institutions' mission. Faculty at many institutions are actively competing with each other for those students who are undecided or who are currently in pre-professional programs of study. Traditionally, higher student enrollments in an academic discipline have equated with an increased number of full-time teaching equivalents and greater funding for the discipline.

During the process of addressing the concerns of external and internal forces universities and colleges are finding that they must determine the general learner outcomes that they believe are critical to the success of all of their students (Fitzpatrick, 1991). At Northwest Missouri State University these general learner outcomes are referred to as Key Quality Indicators. The Key Quality Indicators identified by the institution, department and degree program serve as the foundation for the curriculum development process. It is from these Key Quality Indicators that program outcomes, course outcomes, and performance-based indicators of students' achievement evolve. Based upon the principle of curriculum alignment, which is one of the chief operational principles of out-come-based education, the Health, Physical Education and Recreation Department, at Northwest Missouri State University, has adopted the curriculum development framework illustrated in Figure 1. This framework is a modification of the curriculum framework developed by Fitzpatrick for Township High School District 214 in Arlington Heights, Illinois.

INSERT FIGURE 1 FRAMEWORK FOR CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT

Fig. 1 FRAMEWORK FOR CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT



ADAPTED FROM FITZPATRICK, K. A. (1991)

Establishing the Framework for Outcome Based Education in Higher Education

At the heart of the framework for outcome based education, is the stated mission of the institution. According to Dr. Dean L. Hubbard, an institutions' mission identifies those whom are served and it also sets forth the character, scope and emphasis of the programs that are provided. A key element in most colleges and universities in achieving the mission of the institution is instruction. Instruction may be defined to encompass curriculum, teaching/advising, and the living/learning environment on campus (Hubbard, 1994). Effective instruction of students must be based on the identification of the key quality indicators for success in a specific profession. Hubbard (1994) identifies six steps that each academic discipline should accomplish if they are to achieve a high level of quality in their instructional programs:

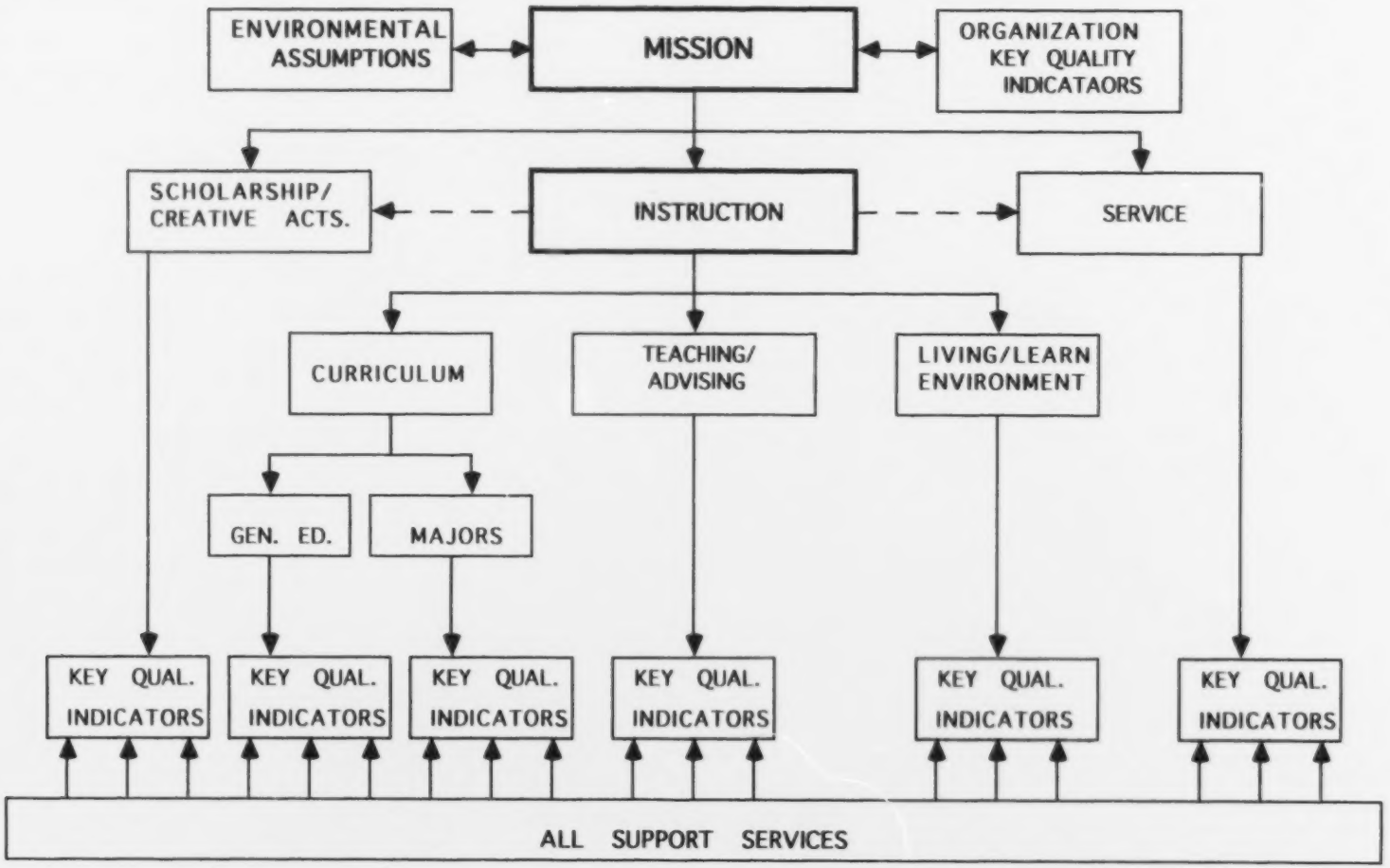
1. Identify Key Quality Indicators for your area as identified in the words of the customers we serve.
2. Validate your Key Quality Indicators with your internal and external customers.
3. Develop an assessment plan for tracking performance.
4. Establish a base line and monitor trends for each Key Quality Indicator.
5. Benchmark your processes against similar functions in other institutions which outperform you on one or more of your Key Quality Indicators.
6. Establish "Stretch" goals.

INSERT FIGURE 2 CULTURE OF QUALITY PLANNING PARADIGM

Step 1 and 2: The Identification and Validation of Key Quality Indicators

According to Hubbard (1994), Key Quality Indicators are defined as those few absolutely essential attributes that all students should possess upon completion of degree requirements in a specific area

FIG. 2 CULTURE OF QUALITY PLANNING PARADIGM



HUBBARD, D. L. (1993)

of study. Key quality indicators are intended to assist faculty with the development of learning objectives which are direct and natural extensions of these Key Quality Indicators. Key Quality Indicators are intended to also serve as a sign that signifies to the customer the presence of a quality attribute (Hubbard, 1994).

The process for identification of Key Quality Indicators can be best achieved through a combination of the following: 1) review of your university, college, department and specific curriculum mission statements and goals, 2) standards established by professional associations, 3) the creation and use of advisory councils, 4) results of student exit interviews, and 5) alumni surveys. At the heart of this process is the review of your university, college, department and degree program mission statements and goals. A clear understanding of one's mission is essential to the process of identifying institutional, departmental and degree program key quality indicators. According to Hubbard (1994), a properly formulated statement of mission contributes to the vitality of a group by establishing internal and external priorities for the present, by looking forward and by giving meaning or purpose.

*INSERT FIGURE 3 NORTHWEST KEY QUALITY INDICATORS

Standards established by professional associations serve as another means for the identification and validation of key quality indicators. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), in cooperation with the American Association for Leisure and Recreation (AALR) have established criteria for the accreditation of baccalaureate curricula in the areas of recreation, park resources, and leisure services. The criteria developed by NRPA/AALR were developed over a period of years by practitioners, educators and lay persons. A stated purpose for the development of this criteria was to insure that institutions continually evaluate their preparation programs for the purposes of development and improvement. During the past two decades NRPA has also developed professional certification programs for general recreation professionals and

Fig. 3

NORTHWEST KEY QUALITY INDICATORS

*Ability to be a self-directed, life long learner, who can effectively communicate with and motivate consumers, peers, and others for leisure, wellness and movement related activities

*Have effective interpersonal skills, capable of collaboration with others in segregated and interdisciplinary settings, and exhibit both leadership and role specific skills

*Serve as positive role model and demonstrate professional characteristics and competencies

*Ability to advocate, promote, and market the profession to a diverse population in a broad variety of settings

*Understanding of the historic, philosophical, technological, and scientific and theoretic bodies of knowledge of the field

*Demonstrated ability to apply theoretical knowledge in a practical setting

therapeutic recreation professionals. Recently the National Association of Sports and Physical Education (NASPE) established standards for programs preparing undergraduate students for careers in fitness. Major advantages to utilizing the standards established by professional associations include: 1) the assumption that they have already been validated as competencies that students should possess upon graduation, 2) the development of a curricula based on the standards gives evidance and confidence to internal forces that successful students may possess the competencies they need to compete in the job market, 3) the standards are usually directly related to professional certification criteria, 5) such standards usually have wide spread acceptance among practitioners, and 6) the adoption of existing standards tends to be more economical for the university/college. This is not to say or suggest that these standards should dictate the courses, their content or process. These professional standards can be used as a resource to assist in the identification and validation of your key quality indicators.

INSERT FIGURE 4 INTERNAL & EXTERNAL VALIDATION

The establishment of an Advisory Council is another method that academic disciplines might utilize in an effort to validate the key quality indicators of their program. Overall the primary role of the Advisory Council would be to provide input relative to the knowledge base, skills, and competencies required of a successfull professional in a changing society and leisure service profession (Shoemaker, 1993). The Advisory Council should consist of practitioners representing each emphasis area in your program, alumni, current students, educators from related disciplines, and executives from state professional associations.

Past and present students in your program provide another means to validate the key quality indicators of your program. Exit interviews with graduating students can provide feedback relative to curricular strengths and needed changes. Alumni surveys can be

Fig. 4

INTERNAL & EXTERNAL VALIDATION

External Sources

1. Professional accreditation and credentialling standards
   a. already validated
   b. give assurance to internal and external sources that students possess life long learning skills
   c. save time, energy and money
   d. represent criteria that must be met for professional credentialling
   e. wide spread acceptance
2. Advisory Council (Southwest Missouri State U. Model)
3. Alumni surveys
4. Evaluations form practicum site supervisors

Internal Sources

1. Institutional mission statements
2. Admission standards for institution and department
   a. general assessment upon entry as a freshman
   b. department - minimum GPA, completion of foundations courses with a C grade or higher
3. Exit requirements
   a. completion of credit hour requirement for graduation
   b. minimum overall GPA
   c. completion of a minimum of 40 upper division credits
   d. capstone course - Senior Seminar
   e. exit interview
   f. exit examination - State has attempted to mandate

done to determine the long term or post graduation perception of the effectiveness of the curriculum in preparing students for success.

Step 3: Developing an Assessment Plan for Tracking Performance

Assessment and tracking student performance can best be achieved through the use of multiple measures and methodologies such as portfolios, dialogue journals, undergraduate research projects,written/practical course exams, and written/practical exit exams. The use of multiple methods makes it possible to evaluate student development in a formative and summative manner. Formative measures of evaluation can be used to help the student, advisor and instructors identify skills and competencies that the student needs to further develop at each stage of their academic preparation. Summative measures of evaluation can be useful to instructors in determining the effectiveness of instructional techniques, learning profiles, topical knowledge and experiences. Summative and formative measures may indicate that current instructional techniques are not resulting in student achievement and mastery of the key quality indicators. This information may require that changes be made in regard to the instructional techniques being utilized.

INSERT FIGURE 5 ASSESSMENT PLAN

Assessment Methods

A portfolio is not a single assessment practice, but a group of strategies used for the documentation and presentation of student performance over time. Mastery of theoretical knowledge, and work related skills and competencies are often highlighted via this method. Portfolios enable faculty to monitor students as they move through their practicum experiences, beginning with the professional foundations course and culuminating with the final student practicum (Kendall, 1994). Portfolios provide students with

Fig. 5

ASSESSMENT PLAN

PORTFOLIOS

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

CAPSTONE COURSE

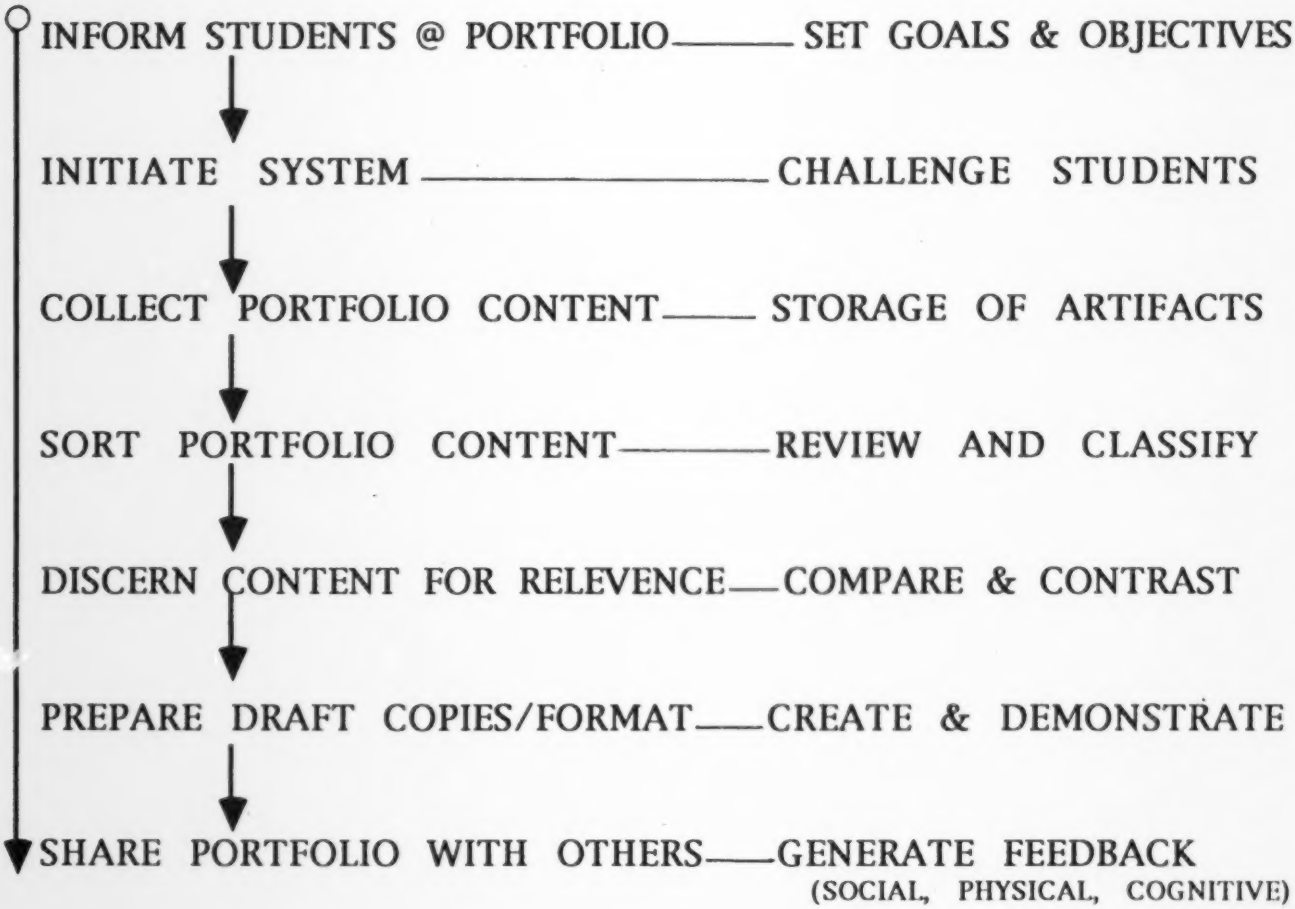
PRACTICUM EVALUATIONS

FOLLOW-UP EVALUATIONS/
TRACKING GRADUATES

COURSE SYLLABI

Fig. 6

PORTFOLIO EVALUATION IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS


INFORM STUDENTS @ PORTFOLIO——SET GOALS & OBJECTIVES
INITIATE SYSTEM——CHALLENGE STUDENTS
COLLECT PORTFOLIO CONTENT——STORAGE OF ARTIFACTS
SORT PORTFOLIO CONTENT——REVIEW AND CLASSIFY
DISCERN CONTENT FOR RELEVENCE—COMPARE & CONTRAST
PREPARE DRAFT COPIES/FORMAT—CREATE & DEMONSTRATE
SHARE PORTFOLIO WITH OTHERS—GENERATE FEEDBACK
(SOCIAL, PHYSICAL, COGNITIVE)

an opportunity to review their own progress as they acquire new knowledge, skills and competencies as reflected in their portfolio. Compilation of the portfolio allows the student the opportunity to indicate what is of significance to them during their professional preparation as they collect, sort and discern the relevence of content (Robertson, 1993).

INSERT FIGURE 6 PORTFOLIO EVALUATION IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

Periodic review of portfolio content helps faculty and students identify areas of difficulty where the student may need more help. The portfolio development processes enable faculty and students to better assess the impact and relative contribution of the recreation/leisure curriculum and the various parts comprising the whole.

INSERT FIGURE 7 & 8 PORTFOLIO DEVELOPMENT
SAMPLE PORTFOLIO TEAM-TR

The portfolio process when properly implemented forces the student to assume more responsibility for their own learning and evaluation of their learning (Kendall, 1994).

Dialogue journals provide another means for assessing and tracking student development. A dialogue journal is a written, audio or video typed or taped communication tool. In many situations a dialogue journal is similar to a diary, a round robin or an add on letter, or an E-mail correspondence. According to Danielson (1988), "Dialogue journals are a functional form of writing, much like having a conversation with another person: The student writes an entry and then the teacher writes a response to the content of the student's entry. Dialogue journals are reflective allowing two person's to examine each other's opinions and ideas and at the same time provide opportunity for feedback. Both reader and writer benefit from such interaction in print." Please note that audio and video tapes, as well as, computers have been used to dialogue journal in

Fig. 7

PORTFOLIO DEVELOPMENT

Your portfolio should include examples of exemplary efforts and abilities that have been demonstrated in classes as well as during volunteer work, fieldwork , and work experiences. The development of your portfolio must be an ongoing process which begins with your first REC class and will require specific effort on your part to maintain a file of the materials that will complete the portfolio.

The portfolio should begin with an original copy of your current resume. Other important items might include: a statement of your professional philosophy of leisure services; examples of your creative abilities, your planning and organizational abilities, and your research expertise; and examples of outside evaluations of your professional efforts. Possible sources for portfolio items are listed below. There may also be examples of your work in other courses that could be considered for inclusion in the portfolio.

Professional Resume

Writing Ability

REC 152 Career Paper
REC 205 Semester Project
REC 400 Semester Project
REC 400 Case Study/Treatment Plan
REC 420 Semester Project

Creative Work

REC 390 Brochure/Audio Visual Commercial
REC 325 Leisure Education Project
Six-Session Bound Program
REC 235 Adaptive Equipment Development
Photo of Adapted Equip Developed
REC 320 Tourism Plan - photos/slides
REC 495 Printed Program for Speaker's Forum
Workshop Presentations
OTHER Newsletters Produced
Articles Submitted for Publication
Conference/Workshop Presentations

Organization/Planning Skills

REC 190 Activity Plan
REC 390 Program Development
REC 400 Program Development
REC 423 TOBO Materials Prepared
PED 350 Wellness Program Plan

Assessment/Research Efforts

REC 330 Research Report
REC 495 Visitor Profile Survey
REC 315 Feasibility Study - include slide series

Self Evaluation

REC 410 Leadership Self-evaluation
REC 491 Student Self-evaluation

Outside Evaluation

REC 225 Final Evaluation
REC 491 Final Evaluation
OTHER Certifications Received
Letters of Reference
Letters of Commendation/Thank You

Resource Files

REC 190 Card File
REC 235 Resources Notebook
REC 422 File of Tools and Maintenance Terms
Literature Resource File

Networking

REC 495 Networking Files
OTHER Conference/Workshop/Seminar

Other

REC 152 Recreation Philosophy
REC 491 Letter of Application
Internship Notebook
Special Project

Fig. 8 SAMPLE PORTFOLOIO TEAM-TR

A. The three main areas covered in the portfolios encompass the following:
   1. Education (Didactic)
   2. Experience (Experiential)
   3. Services (Direct/Indirect)

B. The four main outcome measures will include the following:
   1. Education completed (Para, B.S., M.S.)
   2. Credentials (certificate of training [TEAM-TR], state licensure, national certificate, and others [marriage and family, drugs and alcohol, WSI, EMT, etc.])
   3. Professional Involvement (local, state, regional and national forums/conferences)
   4. Samples of content from three main areas (education, experience, service)

C. Format = Case History/Study/Chronicle

D. Content
   1. Photo and biographical sketch (one paragraph)
   2. Demographic information (one page)
   3. Curriculum vitae (complete)
   4. Letters of introduction (from project director and project coordinator)
   5. Letters of recommendation (three from other sources)
   6. Personal philosophy statement and goal statement
   7. Case history report of self and project (narrative)
   8. Credential copies (WSI, EMT, etc.)
   9. Service summary sheets (summary of hours, populations, settings, tasks, employer ratings, number of groups)
   10. Work samples (audio tape of presentation, video tape of group work/lab/clinic, papers, creative works, service projects or product assignments)

E. How portfolio is to be used
   1. Grant reporting/marketing
   2. Trainee marketing/placement
   3. Case history
   4. File

addition to the traditional written word. Among some of the advantages associated with the use of dialogue journals as a means for assessing student development are the following:

1. They assists students and teachers in clarifying points.
2. Allows for the development of a relationship between individuals.
3. Allows for personalization of feedback.
4. Allows more "quiet" students to have a "voice".
5. Assists students in comprehending course content.
6. Allows the student an "expanded window" of learning opportunity.
7. Allows for a chronology of learning/teaching.

Some of the disadvantages assoc.iated with the use of dialogue journals as a means for assessing student development are the following:

1. Students must commit time on a regularly scheduled basis to make entries into their journal.
2. Instructors must collect the journals on a regular basis, so that feedback is given to the student in a timely manner. The teacher may also find it necessary to allow "in-class" time for students to make journal entries.
3. A major obstacle to the effective use of dialogue journals is the determination of the value they will be given in the process of assessing student development.

Assessment and tracking of student development can also be achieved through the development of student research opportunities. Undergraduate and graduate research projects provide students with the unique educational experience of collaborating with a faculty member on the design and implementation of a project. At the same time, faculty have the opportunity to work closely with students and receive valuable assistance with their research, creative, or professional activity. Student research projects can encourage students to conduct research and pursue academic interests outside of their regular courses by working on special projects with faculty members.

Written/practical exams serve as a primary means of evaluating student achievement of Key Quality Indicators for an academic area. In a few states such as Missouri the state legislature has attempted to mandate the development and administration of written/practical exams as part of the student exit process. The Missouri legislature has proposed that institutional funding be linked to the development of outcome assessment instruments. The legislatures efforts have prompted many of the regional institutions in Missouri to begin the process of developing written/practical exit exams. These institutions have also begun to explore the possiblity of developing an exit exam that could be administered state wide. An exit exam, if developed as part of the assessment plan for tracking performance, would be administered to each major during the semester prior to graduation.

Step 4: Establish a Base Line and Monitor Trends for Each Key Quality Indicator

At Northwest Missouri State University the course syllabi serves as one means of establishing a base line for monitoring student development, and achievement of academic area Key Quality Indicators. The Northwest model for syllabi development requires that the instructor clearly state: 1) the course objective, 2) identify the specific topics to be addressed in the course, 3) learning experiences to be employed, 4) competencies students are expected to develop, 5) performance indicators that will be used to show progress toward competency attainment, and 6) evaluation procedures to be used to assess student development.

INSERT FIGURE 9 CRITERIA FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF COURSE SYLLABI

The competencies and performance indicators not only serve as points for the evaluation of student progress, but are intended to serve as bridges or links between the various courses students must complete within their degree program. If the competencies and

Fig. 9 CRITERIA FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF COURSE SYLLABI

I. Course Information
   A. Title
   B. Course number
   C. Credit hours
   D. Prerequisites
   E. Instructor
II. Course Description (Catalog Description)
III. Course Objective
IV. Topical Outline
V. Learning Experiences
VI. Competencies and Performance Indicators - A competency statement and performance indicators must be identified and listed for each heading listed in the topical outline
VII. Evaluation - All aspects of the evaluation process must be described including the grading scale.
VIII. University and Class Attendance Policy
IX. Access and Accommodation Policy
X. Textbook
XI. Supplementary Readings
XII. Academic Dishonesty Statements

performance indicators for each course are developed with the Key Quality Indicators in mind then instructors should be able to minimize the gaps that frequently exist between courses. The development of these bridges should also make it possible for students to see the linkage between the various courses.

Student involvement in professional and student majors organizations may serve as another base line indicator of the students professional development (Reusser, 1994). According to Elizabeth Hall (1993), membership and participation in professional organizations is often considered a measure of professional commitment. Involvement in student and professional organizations provides students the following opportunities which further indicate a measure of professional commitment:

1. The opportunity to communicate with peers and professionals associated with leisure services.
2. Involvement provides opportunities for students to develop and exhibit leadership skills.
3. Opportunity to serve as a positive role mode and demonstrate professional characteristics and competencies.
4. The opportunity to advocate, promote, and market the profession to a diverse population in a broad variety of settings. (Ferguson, 1994)

At many universities/colleges information related to student involvement in student majors and professional associations is included in the students portfolio. This information is often used by instructors when making recommendations for practicum placement and for professional placement of students upon graduation.

Step 5: Benchmark Your Processes Against Similar Functions in other Institutions

At Northwest Missouri State University, each academic discipline is expected to benchmark their processes against similar functions in other institutions within the region. Benchmarking encourages the instructors within an academic discipline to identify

those practices in other academic institutions that lead to superior performance by their graduates (Camp, 1989). According to Dr. Dean L. Hubbard, 1993, at least two benefits accrue from benchmarking. First, benchmarks raise expectations and result in efforts being made to achieve the superior level of performance being benchmarked. Second, without benchmarks institutional goals tend to be self-serving and do nothing but maintain the status quo. By raising expectations through the use of external benchmarks institutions establish the foundation upon which quality is built. As Camp, 1989, points out benchmarking is the continuous search for the best practices that lead to superior performance. Academic disciplines that fail to continue the search for benchmarks fail to continuously raise their expectations and thus the quality of their programs.

There are many ways that an academic discipline can benchmark its degree programs. One of the simplest ways is through faculty membership and involvement in professional associations. Professional involvement provides faculty the opportunity to learn what is being done at other institutions and to develop a network for the continued sharing of ideas. The knowledge gained through these associations may result in the identification and implementation of numerous benchmarks. Another technique that may assist in the identification and implementation of benchmarks is a comparison of student placement information and student performance on standardized exit exams. Analysis of this information will help in the determination of those areas of instruction that are being done well in the academic preparation of students and those areas that need improvement. A third method that can be used by an academic discipline to benchmark its degree programs is through feedback from students, practitioners and alumni. Through practicum experiences students gain insights regarding their strengths and weaknesses, and those of their academic program. Student feedback to faculty through discussions, practicum site visits and journals can provide the institution with information that may be instrumental in the identification and development of new benchmarks. Practitioners can provide academic institutions with

information specifically related to the degree of skill and competency students display during practicums. Practitioners frequently have had experience with student practicums from many institutions and are in a position to provide feedback regarding the comparative strengths and weaknesses of students coming from the different academic institutions. Feedback from practitioners may result in the further development of benchmarks for the academic discipline. Alumni feedback is the final form of feedback that can assist the academic institution in the process of determining if their benchmarks result in graduating students being able to compete in the job market. Five years after graduation alumni from Northwest Missouri State University are surveyed in order to glean their perspectives regarding their academic preparation. This information is intended to assist the various degree programs in continuing the process of identifying and implementing practices that lead to superior performance by their graduates.

Step 6: Establish 'Stretch' Goals

Stretch goals are those goals that make institutions, instructors and students have to continuously reach beyond the point where they are currently positioned. They make institutions, instructors and students change the way they are doing things on a continuous bases, because only through change can these goals be achieved (Siegel, 1994). Each academic disciplines stretch goals are going to evolve from the benchmarks specifically established for that area. Stretch goals for an academic discipline at one institution are not necessarily going to be the same as those for the same discipline at a sister institution. Differences in the system environment and resources are responsible for much of this difference.

Summary

During the past decade internal and external groups have placed increasing pressure on institutions of higher education to improve the process by which students are prepared. These groups are seeking proof that curricula are equiping students with the knowledge, skills and competencies necessary to compete in a rapidly changing world. As the impact of such current trends as consumer involvement, quality assurance, total quality management, peer reviews, and other outcome-based orientations continue to evolve in higher education, it is obvious that we in higher education can either try and wait out these trends or we can proactively involve ourselves to insure both our survival and our growth.

In an effort to address these concerns institutions of higher education are finding that they must first determine the general learner outcomes that they believe are critical to the success of all their students. It is from these general learner outcomes or key quality indicators, as they are referred to at Northwest Missouri State University, that program outcomes, course outcomes, and performance-based indicators of students' achievement evolve. At the heart of the framework for the identification of learner outcomes and the development of performance-based indicators is the stated mission of the institution. It is the mission statement that identifies those whom are served and it also sets forth the character, scope and emphasis of the programs that are provided. A key element in most colleges and universities in achieving the mission of the institution is instruction. Effective instruction must be based on the identification of the key quality indicators (general learner outcomes) for success in a specific profession. It is from these key quality indicators that program and course outcomes evolve.

A six step approach to achieving a high level of quality in instructional programs has been proposed. It is believed that proper implementation and continuous evaluation of each step will result in the development and maintenance of a high level of quality in instructional programs. Proper implementation and continuous

evaluation of this six step model should help educators address the concerns of internal and external groups.

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